

Tom Horne  
Superintendent

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## ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### **SUPERINTENDENT HORNE PREDICTS MAJOR CHANGE IN SCHOOL CULTURE DUE TO NEW SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS**

PHOENIX (Thursday, September 29, 2005) - State School Superintendent, Tom Horne, predicted today that the passage of new, content-rich social studies standards would produce a major change in school culture in Arizona. Horne's proposed social studies standards passed the State Board this past Monday.

Horne stated: "An unanticipated consequence of the testing culture was that some schools narrowed their curriculum to the subjects that we test – reading, writing, and mathematics – and unwisely deemphasized some subjects such as social studies, science, and the arts. Students need a rich understanding of their history, and of social studies, in order to function as citizens, knowledgeable voters, members of juries, and leaders in their communities."

Some teachers had complained that the new standards generated too much work, and adoption of the standards was controversial. The State Board, which was to have considered the standards in June, postponed the decision until the September meeting. "The adoption of the content-rich social studies standards at the September meeting was a major victory for a rigorous, content-rich curriculum," Horne stated.

Horne explained further: "For example, in the earliest grades, the new standards expose students to American History and histories of earlier civilizations, such as Greece and Rome. Subjects that students have been exposed to at an early age have more resonance for them later, when they are old enough to achieve mastery of the subject. In contrast, under the old standards, many students were subjected to tedious lessons about family and neighborhood which provided no foundation for later learning of history."

To help reduce the additional burden on teachers, the Department of Education will help schools integrate their curriculum so that, during times set aside for reading, students are reading about science and history and not just stories.

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